

Queen inaugurates special education centre

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein, Wednesday opened Al Amal Special Education Centre in Aydon, near Irbid, and inspected its various activities and services for the handicapped children.

The centre has special facilities for the handicapped children in addition to a physiotherapy unit and modern classrooms.

The Queen, who was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Al Faisal and other officials, was briefed by the executive president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), which is running the centre.

The executive president, Dr. Abdullah Al Khatib, said that the centre was one of a series of facilities being opened in the Kingdom for the care of the

handicapped children between six and 12 years old.

The Aydon centre is one of nine similar centres, seven of which have already been set up. Work on one of the remaining two centres, located in Salt, is still underway, while work will begin on the Tafleh Centre during 1991, Mr. Khatib said.

Only children with relatively moderate disabilities are being accepted in the Aydon and the other centres, each of which accommodates 50 children. The handicapped children receive special training designed to develop their skills to enable them to become self-sufficient.

Prominent personalities from the Irbid area, including the president of Yarmouk University and the Irbid mayor, were present at the ceremony.

Cabinet names 5 envoys

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet has appointed Mr. Adnan Talhouni as Jordan's ambassador to Morocco, Mr. Nayef Mula ambassador to Brazil, Mr. Walid Bataineh ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Haidar Mahmoud ambassador to Tunisia and Mr. Farouk Qasrawi non-resident ambassador to the Philippines and Korea.

In another development, the Cabinet announced a new committee to supervise the restoration of Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Holy Rock in Jerusalem. The committee, which will be chaired by the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, is to include representatives of the Foreign Ministry, the Foreign Ministry's Department for Palestinian Affairs, the Royal Commission for Jerusalem Affairs and the director of the Awqaf Department in Jerusalem.

The Cabinet also decided that Jordan should take part in the 25th Tripoli International Fair, to be held next year in the Libyan capital. The fair will be held between March 5 and March 25.

The Cabinet said that participation in the Libyan fair was deemed necessary in view of the

close economic cooperation between Libya and Jordan and the marketing of Jordanian products in Libyan markets.

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Prince Hassan urges use of zakat to boost Muslim solidarity

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has urged Muslim scholars to utilise zakat (alms to the poor) in a manner that would enhance solidarity among members of the Muslim community and end such chronic ills as poverty, ignorance and disease that have been plaguing the Islamic society.

In a message to the eighth conference of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research (Al Al Bayt Foundation), the Crown Prince said that the world community had done nothing to deal with such prob-

lems and had watched numerous societies fall below the poverty line.

The world community's inaction has exacerbated the sufferings of millions of people facing poverty and a contaminated environment.

"The time has come for Muslim scholars to stimulate the process of enhancing solidarity among the members of the Muslim community through the proper application of zakat," the Crown Prince said. "For this to be achieved, a special Islamic fund to help relieve Muslim com-

munities facing natural and man-made disasters should be set up, the Crown Prince said.

In his message, the Crown Prince called on Muslim scholars to turn their attention to proper education for the young generation who should be prepared to accept the idea of building bridges of understanding with other nations to narrow the gap among nations of various faiths, policies, interests, ideologies and cultures.

Prince Hassan said that the Islamic World is now in dire need of a new approach in dealing with

other nations. This approach should lay the foundation for new relations among nations of the world, giving special attention to the information services which help promote coexistence and harmony among people. The Prince said.

He said that the information services and the media could play a major role in removing all accusations, distortions and bad images in Western minds about the Muslim person who has been pictured as a terrorist, backward, intent only on satisfying his own desires and whims.

Ministry to help economy class hotels have a facelift

AMMAN (J.T.) — Economy class hotels in downtown Amman and in other cities will benefit from a set of measures to be taken by the Ministry of Tourism which is keen on boosting the tourism industry in Jordan.

The new minister of tourism, Mr. Abdul Karim Al Kabarti, said Wednesday that a special credit fund would be established to offer loans to the economy class and cheap hotels enabling them to carry out renovation work to attract more visitors to Jordan. The pledge came at a meeting the minister had with owners of economy class hotels during which several issues pertaining to hotel business were reviewed.

The Ministry of Tourism will also study the prospect of reducing the water and electricity charges for these hotels and will, in cooperation with the Amman Municipality, help them set up special areas for cars transporting tourists to and from hotels, Mr. Kabarti said.

The minister listened to complaints raised by the hotel owners which, among other things, in-

cluded the high fares charged by taxi drivers. The minister promised to take up this issue with the Public Security Department and the drivers' union to find a solution.

Mr. Kabarti announced that the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities would soon issue a tourist guidebook for economy class hotels and would distribute leaflets to help attract more visitors to Jordan.

"In cooperation with the concerned authorities, the ministry plans to help reduce water and electricity charges for these hotels and will seek the assistance of the Ministry of Labour to facilitate the employment of non-Jordanian workers in economy class hotels," the minister said.

Ministry Secretary General Mr. Nasri Atallah and the Jordan Hotels Association President Mr. Michael Nazzari were present at the meeting.

Earlier, the Ministry of Tourism reached agreement with Royal Jordanian (RJ) to initiate joint plans designed to attract more tourists to the Kingdom.

Libyans facilitated entry to Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is offering facilities to Libyan nationals entering the Kingdom by immediately issuing them visas at Jordanian embassies abroad and ports of entry, according to a Jordan News Agency, Petra, announcement.

The announcement quoted Minister of Interior Jawdat Esboul as saying that Libyans wishing to come to Jordan will be issued visas at the Jordanian embassies or Jordanian airports, sea ports or border posts without referring their applications to the Interior Ministry in Amman.

The move was seen as a sign of the progressive improvement in relations between Jordan and Libya which restored diplomatic relations last year following a break of several years. Relations were initially discontinued because of a fire at Jordan's Embassy in Tripoli in 1983 during disturbances over Middle East policies.



LUCKY NUMBER 1399 WINS APPLE MACINTOSH: Mr. Tareef Nabeel was the lucky winner last week when he won an Apple Macintosh during Apple Expo '91 that was held at the Amman Marriott. The drawing of the prize was sponsored by Apple's authorised dealer, Ideal Systems.

More Palestinians in Israeli prisons join hunger strike

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Detainees in more Israeli jails, totalling around 4,000 Palestinians, have joined an open hunger strike staged by other prisoners and detainees in four prisons. At least two other jails, those in Nablus and Jeneid, are expected to join the strike soon.

The new addition is Ansar 3 in the Naqab (the southern desert areas of occupied Palestine), according to Palestinian sources.

They said that the other jails whose detainees are on strike are those of Nafha, Asqalan, Ramleh and Hebron. The strike has been continuing for the past 12 days. The hunger strike was started

by detainees in the Nafha prison in protest against the inhuman treatment of the prisoners and the atrocities committed by the Israeli authorities in a bid to stifle the Palestine national movement.

A group of Palestinians staged a sit-in at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Amman Tuesday in support of the Palestinian prisoners, demanding better treatment. They presented a memorandum to the ICRC representative in Jordan protesting the inhuman treatment of the Palestinian detainees at the hands of the Israeli authorities.

The memorandum said that more than 18,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees were on hunger strike in Israeli jails. A similar sit-in was held at the

ICRC in Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus and Hebron by relatives of the detainees and representatives of the professional unions in the occupied Arab territories.

Israel has set up more than 47 detention camps and jails for the Palestinians who staged their first general hunger strike at Asqalan prison in 1970 for 60 days. That was followed by a hunger strike at Nafha in 1980, lasting 30 days, and one at Jeneid in 1987 lasting over 20 days.

The memorandum submitted to the ICRC offices said that the Palestinian detainees were not given enough food and cells lacked essential materials for personal hygiene. It also said that the detainees were constantly tortured.

Out of \$107m Italian assistance, \$55m will help implement 14 projects

Italy to help the Kingdom implement development projects

By Sereya Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An Italian team has arrived in Jordan to start work on three development projects, as part of the \$107 million assistance aid package pledged by the Italian government to Jordan.

An agreement signed on June 12, was the first of its kind between the two countries. Under the terms of the agreement, the Italian government would allocate grants totalling \$55 million in the form of technical assistance for the implementation of 14 development projects.

The mission arrived in Jordan on June 27. It comprises five experts from the Italian company COTECNO. The company is a private company, recognised by the Italian government, that carries out technical assistance projects in the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, two of the five experts spoke about the three projects their company had undertaken under the directive of the Italian Foreign Ministry. The projects are: the expansion of the Salt Handicraft School, a project to rehabilitate the hearing impaired and children with speech problems and technical assistance to the Amman University College for Applied Engineering.

Diego Assennato, the production director of COTECNO, said that the Salt Hand-

icraft School project started in 1988. "One year later the Noor Al Hussein Foundation got involved," Mr. Assennato said. "We provided technical assistance in two sectors: weaving and pottery," he added.

Mr. Assennato said that after the completion of the first phase of the project the Jordanian government asked for more assistance to expand the handicraft school. "The new phase has two parts: the first is supplying more equipment, experts, training and scholarships to the school, especially in the fields of weaving and pottery; the second involves developing new sectors such as jewellery design, glass work, and metal work," he said.

Mr. Assennato added that there were plans in store to provide the Jordanian government with assistance in restoring old buildings in Salt, along with providing technical assistance for marketing Jordanian handicrafts.

The second project involves the rehabilitation of the centre for the hearing impaired and children with speech problems.

Mr. Assennato said that the Italian government has so far granted the centre \$700,000 in equipment, mainly hearing aid and sophisticated equipment for diagnosis. "In my opinion the centre is the best equipped in the Middle East," he said.

The centre, supervised by the Queen Alia Welfare Fund, was also provided with technical assistance, made available

by an Italian coordinator who was stationed in Jordan for three and a half years, in addition to a number of temporary experts.

Under the terms of the new Jordanian-Italian agreement, the centre will be granted \$900,000 to cover most of the country: Aqaba, Ma'an and Salt, Mr. Assennato informed the Jordan Times.

The third project provides technical assistance to the Amman University College for Applied Engineering.

According to Massimo Maciocia, an expert at the General Directorate for cooperation in development in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the technical assistance will help supplement the two-year diploma level at the college to the four year bachelor level.

"Our major aim is to advance the technology in the labs of the university, to enable the students to move from the diploma level to the bachelor level," Mr. Maciocia explained. "We will also provide electrical machines and control systems as well as prepare a list of equipment to send to Amman," he added.

Under this aid package, the Italian government will also provide a nine-month scholarship for six trainees in Italy.

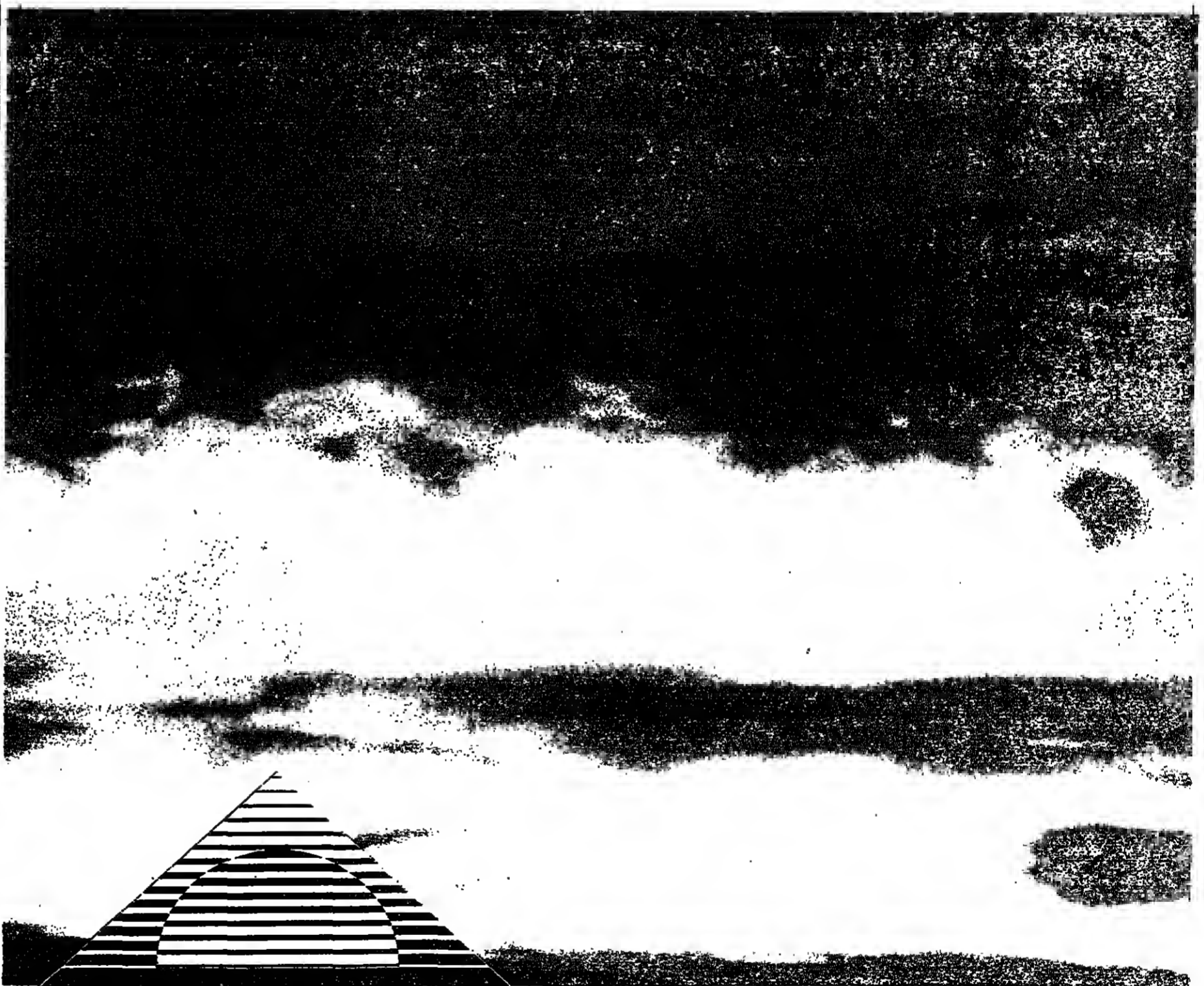
"We will also send two Italian experts, one fixed in Amman for three and a half year, and the other will be called upon when needed," Mr. Maciocia said.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

- ★ An exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Showqi Shoukial, Mohammad Al Jalous and Rifat Al Razzaz at Abdel Hameed Shouman Foundation 10 a.m. — 8 p.m.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Maher Al Shuaili at Alia Art Gallery, Insurance Building, 1st Circle.
- ★ Ceramic exhibition by Margaret Tudros and Najwa Ainnah at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by painter Gagik Haroutounian, Armenian artist from Yerevan, at Al Watani Sporting Club, Al Ashrafiah (Open only on Friday from 4:00 p.m. till 10 p.m.).

NAF aids 989 needy families

KARAK (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) in the Karak Governorate has paid JD 41,780 as recurrent financial assistance to 989 needy families during the past two months, according to Director of the Social Development Department, Mr. Saleh Al Saqour.



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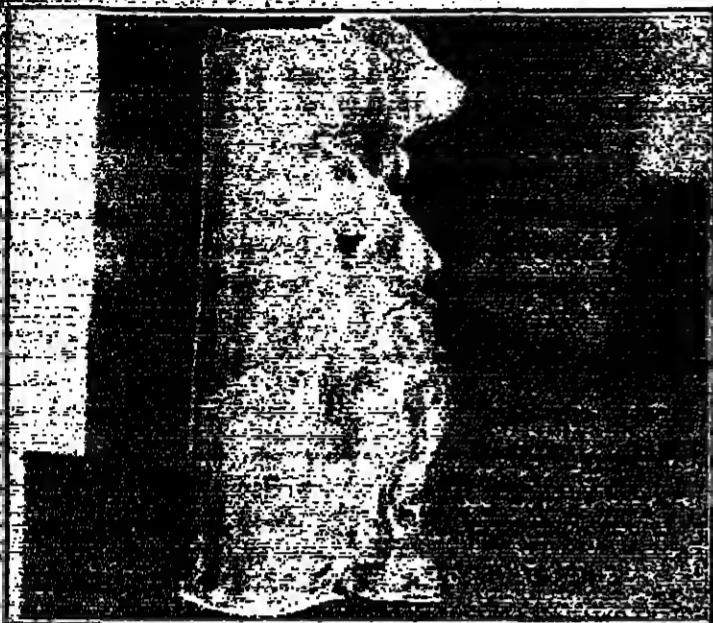
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2 artists hold ceramics exhibition at Spanish Centre Exhibits display mixture of classic, modern styles



A creation by Margaret Tadros called "triangle cylinder with glass," is one of the items displayed at the exhibition.

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Many artists work with clay, but only few work with it with the concept that it is the remains of someone once alive. This is how artist Margaret Tadros, who is currently displaying ceramic art at the Spanish Cultural Centre along with Najwa Annab, conceives the material she works with.

Of the 23 shapes and figures displayed, many are made of a single piece of clay that has been rolled with a rolling pin to a certain thickness, and then shaped, dried and baked after which the finishing touches were added.

According to Tadros, it is very common that the shaped form cracks beyond repair, and it is not unusual to make five attempts at making a

plate and only come out with one which is flawless. "It is at times like this when the clay cracks or breaks that I feel that this particular clay is the remains of an evil man," Tadros said, adding that she works with clay fully aware that it is something delicate.

Tadros varies her techniques in every piece. In several forms, (cylinders, plates, and bowls) she uses glass. By placing pieces of glass on the clay form while it is still wet and then baking it in a high temperature kiln at a pre-tested temperature she gets the desired effect. "Using a kiln is another sensitive aspect of my work," Tadros said. "If the glass I use expands while the type of clay happens to shrink too much with heat, then the piece breaks up and it's as much as lost."

Another eye-catching characteristic of Tadros' work is the fact that she uses canvases as part of her shapes. "A great deal can be done with canvas. I usually dip a piece in very soft clay and then in some metal oxides depending on the colour I want." (Oxides of certain metals, called the transition metals, give off a characteristic colour when exposed to heat. Since Tadros emphasises greens in her works she uses copper oxides to get the desired colours then I drape these canvases onto pre-shaped clay," she said pointing to an example of a bowl, part of which was once a canvas that it is now well-blended within the bowl as though it was always a part of it.

Tadros who received a Master's degree in Industrial Design from the Academy of Arts in Bucharest, Romania, is now completely dedicated to ceramic art works. She has participated in over 8 exhibitions and held two solo exhibitions.

In deep contrast with the bright greens and reds, Najwa Annab's clay art pieces are of natural colours. "I go through phases with my art whether it is the shapes or the colours," Annab explained. "In this exhibition I have concentrated on rounded shapes that have small bases. I used red earthenware clay and kept the colour as close to its natural form as possible even after baking."

To the observant eye Annab's art pieces, which she forms free-handedly, look almost like they could move. The small bases achieve this

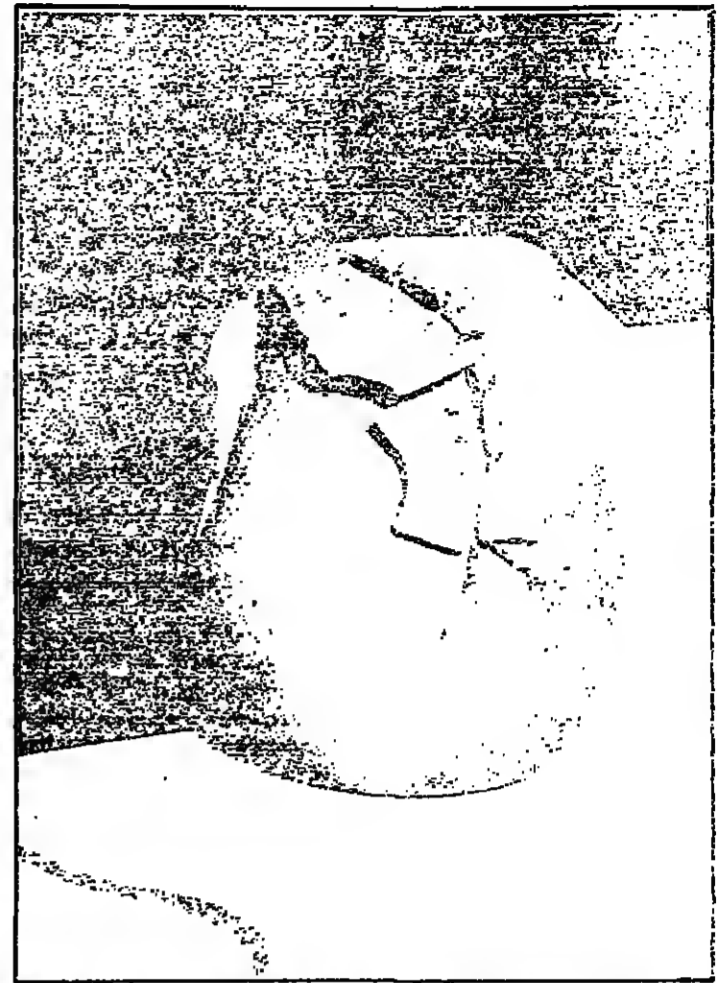
apparent mobility, as opposed to large bases which would have given a rooted appearance.

In many examples, Annab uses canvas impressions on clay. "I try to do something different with every bowl I make. I think the idea of having clay with canvas-like imprints, draped around forms gives those forms a unique appearance," she said, mentioning that she got the idea for doing that after placing a wet cloth over a clay vase, merely to prevent it from drying up too fast.

One of the features Annab is proud of in her works is the intricate use of bundles thin copper wires. "I lace copper wire into some of my pieces. This sometimes takes as long as half a day of continuous work, but the touch it achieves is something I like," she said.

The work looks very wholesome to the extent that any artificial colour would take away from it, but Annab admits that she sometimes adds some "natural" colouring by blackening certain protrusions on vases. "I use candles and kindled newspapers to darken certain pieces," Annab said. "I also tarnish the clay with a silver spoon so that the natural glow of the clay comes out. Often, I use olive oil for polish."

Annab received a B.A. in three dimensional design (ceramic/weaving) at West Surrey College of Art and Design in the United Kingdom. She now teaches art and ceramics at the Baccalaureate School. This is Annab's seventh participation in an art exhibition. This exhibition will continue until July 6.



A sewn pot of red clay, one of the works by Najwa Annab, currently on display at the Spanish Cultural Centre.

Gems of the world

By Ziad Dajani

Gem stones have always fascinated mankind. In earlier centuries they were reserved for the ruling classes only. Gem stones have a real and proven influence over people and their lives. To go further over their health and destination.

How? Wearing gems and authentic jewellery made of natural gems gives the wearer a feeling of security, self confidence and wealth. Rulers in the past sealed their documents with jewel encrusted seals which was the expression of their power and wealth.

Gems nowadays are bought for pleasure, in appreciation of its beauty. Also some superstitious people believe gems bring luck restoring health and brings you close to your goal and so forth, for centuries. It has been believed that gems and jewels offer protection against ghosts and have angels work in the wearer's favour, repulse evil and preserve health. They also thought gems made nobility gracious and brought sailors home.

Up to the 19th century gemstones were used as medicines against illnesses. Thus used in three ways:

A. The mere presence of the stone was sufficient to effect a cure.

B. The gem was placed on the human body.

C. The stone was crushed, powdered and swallowed as medicine.

If the stone used did not accomplish the healing, it was believed to be not a genuine gem. Even today calcium tablets made out of powdered pearls are used as medicine in Japan. This brings us to the stones of the month. Each stone is linked to astrology and the Zodiac. Gems are also used in religious circles. The Pope and bishops always wear gems. From an investment point of view it is a fact that it is wealth kept, and has survived pressures of inflation better than most investments over the last decades.

As of last year, semi-precious stones have become precious stones. Some stones now are becoming very rare and difficult to find. Accordingly they are becoming very expensive. For example the "Alexandrite" (Number after Czar Alexander II). It is green in daylight, and light red in artificial light. Many stones are rare now and their prices are, in some cases, unbelievable.

Stones now are also being used in ornamental items, ashtrays, clocks, tables etc.

Gems are weight in carats. Colour is the most important aspect of gems. Real colours of gems appear better in daylight and not in artificial light. Each gem has a unique colour of its own. Some stones have many colours such as the Opal.

Transparency is also an important factor in determining a gem. The more transparent, the better, but a stone without any inclusions or air bubbles should raise doubts and must be professionally examined.

Gems could be found in many parts of the world. Mainly the original place and the secondary place.

The original place is where the gems are found stuck to

or within the mother rock. The secondary place is the place where the gem ends up after the forces of nature carry it by winds, storms and rivers. Mixing gem is easier in secondary places because gems are found looser and not as adherent as gems found in the mother rock.

Most deposits of gems are found in the following countries: South Africa, South East Asia, Brazil, the Urals, Australia, and the mountain zones of the U.S.

Imitation of gem stones

Imitation of gem stones started in Egypt in 1758. An Austrian named Joseph Strasser developed a type of glass which could be cut to look similar to a diamond. These were called "Strass" and were prohibited from use by the Empress Maria Theresa. Czechoslovakia was also an important centre for glass jewellery until 1945. Another way of imitation is using a layer of a real gem and the rest glass.

Synthetic gems (false gem) are man-made. They look like real stones, mostly in rubies, sapphires, emeralds and diamonds.

To tell the difference you have to examine the hardness of the gem as well as its temperature. Machines for this purpose are sold to determine their authenticity.

The increased demand for pearls has led to their cultivation in large quantities. Such cultured pearls are not imitation, but a natural product which has been produced with man's help. Today cultured pearls amount to 90 per cent of the total pearl trade.

The pearls to be cultivated stay in water for 3 to 4 years and there are many complicated processes to be followed.

Gems of your birth

Let January's maiden be all garnet gemmed with constancy.
In fitful February, it's a verity
That the amethyst demotes sincerity.
But oh what shall a March maid do?
Wear an aquamarine to be brave and true.
The April girl has a brave defence.
The diamond guards her innocence.
Sweet child of May, you'll taste the caress
Of emerald's promised happiness.
Pearls should bring joy to the girls of June.
For youthful beauty is their special boon.
The ruby stole a spark from heaven above.
To bring the July maiden untold love.
The August maiden so sweetly coy,
Wears a peridot, the gem of joy.
Out of the depths shall sapphires come,
For September's child to have wisdom.
October's child in darkness of may grope,
The iridescent opal bids it hope.
Born in November, happy is she
Whom the topaz teaches fidelity.
December's child shall live to
bless the turquoise that ensures success.

Rome hails Valentino as local hero

By John Follain

ROME — The "eternal city" has just paid fashion guru Valentino a tribute fit for a Roman emperor to celebrate the first 30 years of his career.

A bejewelled jet-set led by Elizabeth Taylor flew in to toast Valentino Garavani, the Italian who since the 1960s has dressed Taylor herself and the likes of Jackie Onassis, Audrey Hepburn and Nancy Reagan.

Rome's mayor threw a party on Capitol Hill, the site where victorious generals were acclaimed in the days of the Roman Empire.

The city had apparently forgiven the dapper Valentino for betraying it three years ago when he became the first Italian designer to give a

show only in Paris, where he first studied fashion.

Valentino, 59, a small figure whose arched eyebrows and wide smile give him an uncanny cat-like expression, was born in northern Italy but has lived and worked in Rome ever since he opened an atelier in the Chic Via Dei Condotti in the 1950s.

"This is my home now," he said during a break from hugging and kissing dozens of devoted buyers and models, including Carol Alt and Brigitte Bardot look-alike Claudia Schiffer.

"I feel so emotional. I haven't ever felt as moved as now, not even during my most important showings," he added.

For Valentino it was the crowning of a career he started against the wishes of

his own wealthy family, who saw fashion as a frivolous world far removed from their Lombard roots.

Thirty years after opening his first boutique, the stylist celebrated with the Capitol Hill party, a midsummer ball the following night and two exhibitions of his work.

Today his coveted "V" label can also be found in cars, tiles, perfumes, jewellery and household linen.

The ghosts of many glamorous names joined the festivities through dresses shown at the main exhibition, which is due to move on to Paris, London and New York.

The cream tunic and pleated skirt worn by Jackie Kennedy when she married into the Onassis dynasty, and black lace dresses bought by

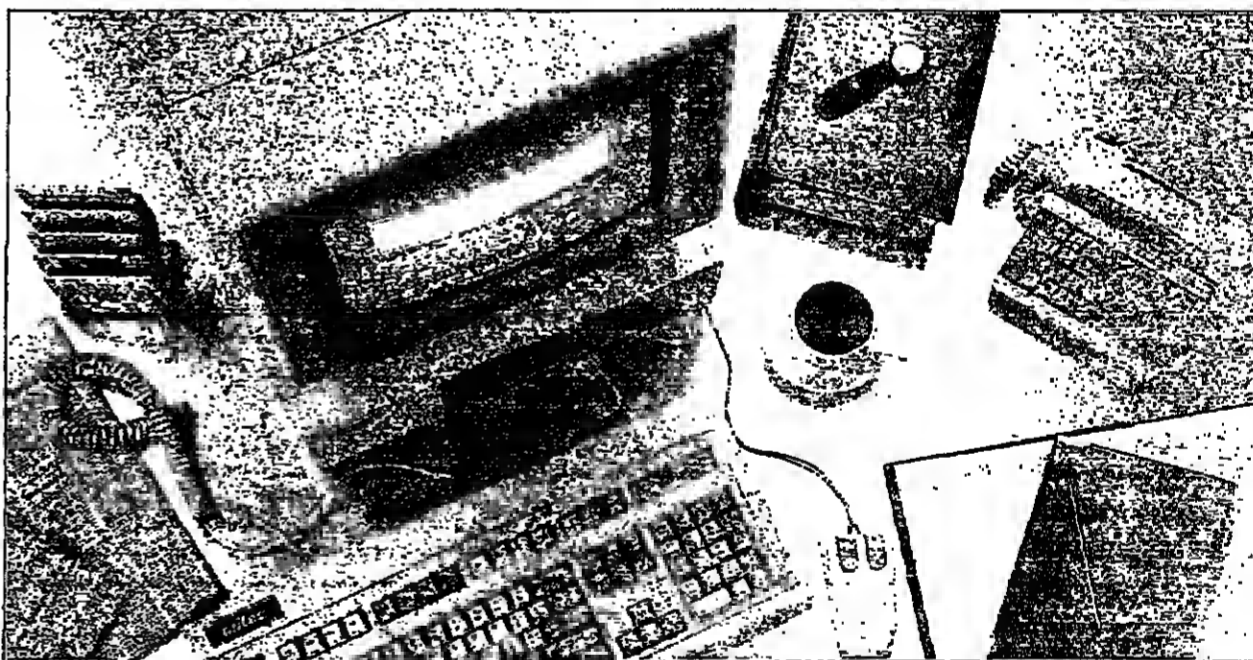
Audrey Hepburn in the 1960s and 70s are star showpieces among 318 Valentino creations.

Liz Taylor cried out in delight when she toured the exhibition, recognising a copy of her first Valentino dress which she wore to the premiere of Cleopatra in 1963.

"It was so wonderful to see it. It was all there. I recognised all the details. The other one bit the dust long ago," she said after a quick change into a Valentino ballgown, a white chiffon creation with a daring décollete, for the candlelit dinner in the Villa Medici above the Spanish Steps.

Rival designers came to pay homage too — Givenchy, Ungaro and Gianfranco Ferré among them.

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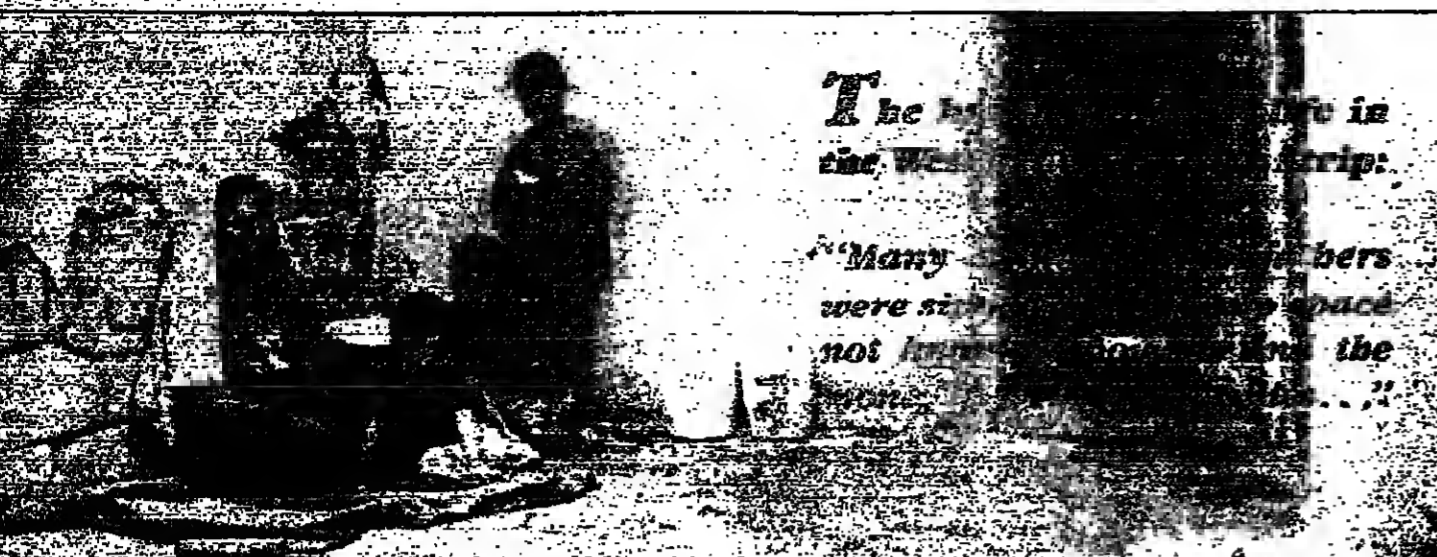
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Fathers, mothers weep in Gaza

Dr. Masir K. Nasser
Assistant Executive Director
United Palestinian Appeal
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Dr. Nasser:

THE economic situation in the Gaza Strip is becoming more desperate everyday. Most of all, the children are suffering. The Gulf war had a devastating impact on the lives of many residents. A host of factors have contributed to the harsh reality that exists today in Gaza:

- An inhumanly cruel curfew collectively imposed on a population of 700,000 men, women and children;
- An almost totally ineffective social welfare system that very selectively meets out an average of U.S. \$10 per family per month for hardship cases;
- Stoppage of most labourers from going to their work in Israel and elsewhere;

• The imprisonment of the main breadwinners of thousands of families.

Small merchants, craftsmen and factory owners, many of whom previously enjoyed a comfortable standard of living, are now facing financial ruin — something which started during the intifada, and will certainly be realised in full should the curfew continue to drag on. The plight of the day labourer is even more bleak: if the labourer does not work, the family does not eat. A day's work buys enough food for the worker's family for that day only. I would like to emphasise that the financial situation of thousands of families became extremely difficult during the intifada, was worsened drastically during the Gulf war, and continues to be very critical after the war.

Through the course of my work at the Benevolent Society Child Development Centre in Gaza, I have personally gone on many home visits with our

social workers during the curfew. It is difficult to describe how very distraught and desperate we found many families to be. In a few instances we were able to help: many mothers and fathers wept at this gesture. We saw scores of families unable to afford flour, cooking fuel, and staples. Most mothers we visited had no milk for their infants and older children, many of whom were malnourished and/or disabled. We found children burning with fever and no money with which to purchase medications or to pay doctor's fees. Many mothers and fathers were simply staring into space not knowing how to find the money to feed their families, nor how to pay accumulating debts to grocers who had let them buy food on credit. We also saw old people suffering because they could not afford medication, had no health insurance, no warm clothing.

The Child Development Centre is literally inundated by mothers and fathers seeking milk, food, and formula for their youngsters. I have personally seen children begging during curfew. As a trial, I had one child's story checked out. It was true. The family's breadwinner was crippled; the mother was very ill. The one-roomed, leaky-roofed structure in the Daraj Quarter of Gaza was devoid of any food, flour, and cooking fuel. And the human tragedies go on...

I hope that this letter will help you and others who care to understand just how deplorable the true situation is here in the Gaza Strip.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to help us to help the many families in the Gaza Strip who are at the brink of losing all hope.

Very truly yours,
Geraldine Shawwa,
Executive Coordinator,
The Benevolent Society
for the Gaza Strip,
Child Development Centre.

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Cabinet seen able to pass test

(Continued from page 1)

The sources say that while some ministers are calling on Mr. Masri to clarify in the policy statement that his government is not a "negotiations government," others have rejected this idea arguing that it has always been the standing policy of the Kingdom to advocate a peaceful end to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on international legitimacy and United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338.

The Muslim Brotherhood as well as radical Arab nationalists have expressed their concern that Palestinian-born Masri, who held the post of foreign minister in the previous government, would enter into negotiations over the Palestinian problem which would lead to a solution short of their target of the complete liberation of all Palestinian land.

Other ministers, however, have argued that it has always been the standing policy of Jordan to advocate peace and that this government should not fear being a supporter of peace as long as it is based on international legitimacy and U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338.

These ministers also maintain that the Muslim Brotherhood is using this argument as a cover-up to cloak their rejection of Mr. Masri's government.

Analysts and observers predict that Mr. Masri will present a compromise formula on this point in which he will stress Jordan's desire for making progress in peace efforts while seeking to ease the pressure on Jordan's conditions for international legitimacy.

Sources also add that many favourable votes are contingent on the policy statement naming the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In general the sources and analysts say, Mr. Masri and his Cabinet will provide the House with a comprehensive plan which will deal with the different aspects of local concerns and issues based on the foundations of the National Charter, which was signed by all the political forces represented in Parliament.

"We know that Parliament cannot discuss with us any technical points concerning what was laid out in the National Charter," one cabinet minister said. "This is the government of the charter and the application of its stipulations which were agreed upon and signed by all sides."

This is precisely, analysts maintain, why the government decided to present itself for a vote of confidence quickly although not required to do so by law until the regular session of the House in November.

Although there were legal arguments against going before Parliament for a vote of confidence, Mr. Masri decided to make this move to highlight the confidence his government has in itself and to gain the mandate to start working effectively in a mood of democracy instead of delaying the whole process for months, cabinet sources told the Jordan Times.

Those close to the government fear that the bureaucracy that has become symptomatic of the administrative state in Jordan could hinder any effort at administrative reform and overhauling the administrative make-up of government offices and departments.

Some cited the civil service system as the main obstacle to any real reform. "All efforts are doomed to failure if we do not start employing the right man for the job instead of being limited to the system of automatic promotion as stipulated by the civil service law," one observer argued.

But, most importantly, the government would have to at least buy out a policy for curbing unemployment and tackling the economy which threatens to be the biggest task facing any reformer. The premier, in his meeting with the Jordanian editors-in-chief last week, pointed to increasing investment as a way to dealing with these problems.

However, analysts add, Mr. Masri's government will also be faced with the task of bringing back a balance in inter-Arab relations in spite of the incredible difficulties on that path as a way of at least halting any

increase of unemployment resulting from the possible return of another 100,000 Jordanians from the Gulf states.

One source said that there were awesome difficulties facing Mr. Masri in that direction, especially since there were no real indication that the Gulf states are moving towards reconciliation.

In the final analysis, Mr. Masri's government will have to pass the confidence session debates before it embarks on any policies pertaining to local, Arab or international politics.

Observers, unable to divide the votes among the blocs in Parliament or its independent members as of yet, say that there is confidence that Mr. Masri's Cabinet will not be faced with 41 no votes.

"The constitution is clear. The government can only fall if 41 people clearly opposed it and this is not going to happen to this government," one deputy said.

The law considers abstentions from voting as favourable to the government and therefore any count of votes will necessarily add the yes votes as well as the abstentions to indicate support for the government.

PLO holds urgent talks

(Continued from page 1)

Since then, she said, "a number of questions" have come back from the Syrians through the U.S. ambassador in Damascus. "So it has not been like the letter was just handed them and there's been no communication since then," she said.

Referring to Mr. Bush's remarks at a July 1 news conference in Maine, Ms. Tutwiler pointed out that the president said he would like to see the situation in the Middle East resolved peacefully. "It's something that he cares about," she said.

After Tuesday's meeting, Mr. Hussein and Mrs. Ashrawi said they stressed that there must be a role for the PLO in the peace process.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, which lasted more than an hour, Mr. Hussein said: "We insisted that the PLO must have a role in negotiations."

Mrs. Ashrawi said that the leadership of the PLO is determined through a "democratic process" and that the question of leadership is "an internal Palestinian issue."

"The Palestine National Council voted the current leadership in, and the current leadership will continue until it is voted out," she said.

Asked if Mr. Hussein and she have been in contact with Chairman Arafat, Mrs. Ashrawi said, "we are not allowed to be in touch with the PLO officially, it is illegal."

Mr. Hussein said the meeting with Secretary Baker was a "continuation of talks started in Jerusalem. We hope that this meeting will be followed by other meetings."

Lebanese Army pound Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

Guerrillas said they feared the army wanted to force them out of Lebanon. It would be the third time in a decade the PLO has withdrawn its forces in defeat.

In Tunis, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat urged France, Britain and the Soviet Union to help stop the fighting. He also appealed to

Egypt, Libya and Syria, which has 40,000 troops in Lebanon. Mr. Zeid Wehbi, the PLO representative in Lebanon, said the guerrillas would fight to the death if necessary.

"The situation is very dark. It is bleak... we will defend ourselves to the last drop of blood," he told Reuters.

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